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PRESENT DIFFICULTIES OF VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

NATIONAL SOCIETY'S

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE

SOCIETY'S NEW ROOM, SANCTUARY, WESTMINSTER

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 1875

including Speeches by

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY
THE EARL OF SHAFESBURY
THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD

LORD LYTTELTON
LORD REDESDALE
MR. HUGH BIRLEY, M.P.

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY.

SHE Sixty-fourth Annual Meeting of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church was held on Wednesday, the 9th June, 1875, at the new room erected over the Society's Depository at Westminster. The Archbishop of Canterbury presided, and was supported by the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Hereford, Lichfield, Llandaff, Bangor, Rochester, and St. Asaph, the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Earl Nelson, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Redesdale, Mr. Hugh Birley, M.P., Mr. W. U. Heygate, M.P., Mr. Beresford-Hope, M.P., Lieut-General Sir Richard Wilbraham, Archdeacon Jennings, Hon. Henry Walpole, Canon Gregory, Mr. P. Cazenove, Mr. Shaw Stewart, and other gentlemen. The attendance was large, and included many of the London and country clergy.

His Grace the Primate delivered the following address:—

My lords, ladies, and gentlemen, I beg to say a very few words before we commence the actual business of this meeting. I cannot address a meeting of the National Society in this room to-day without thinking of our revered friend Archdeacon Sinclair (hear, hear), who has been so recently taken away from amonsgt us, and whatever vote the society might come to on the loss it has sustained by his death, it would, I am sure, be unanimous. (Hear, hear.) I believe it has been thought that the best mode of marking our sense of the loss which the Church of England has sustained by his death was to insert a passage on the subject in the Report which has been circulated; and I desire now to express my personal sense of the loss which not only the Church of England, but the cause of Scriptural and Church of England education, have sustained. The term of years during which he served this Society was long extended, and everyone who knows the Society will testify that he served it faithfully. (Cheers.) He not only served it faithfully, but he served it under very difficult circumstances; and I do believe that it is mainly owing to his tact, good sense, and perseverance that the cause of education is in the position in which we are enabled to report it to be to-day. I believe that he

did great service to the National Society ; that he did great service, through the National Society, to the nation at large ; and that he roused the nation to a full understanding of the importance of many of the issues which have been brought before the public during the past few years, and some of which remain to be settled in the years that are before us. (Hear, hear.) We cannot say that the death of Archdeacon Sinclair was premature, for he had lived to an advanced age, and he had the satisfaction in his advanced years of being able to serve the Church with vigour up to within a few days of his death. (Cheers.) Perhaps I ought now to say one or two words with regard to the position of the National Society at the present moment. It will be scarcely necessary for me in this meeting to urge the importance of maintaining the National Society. But there are persons outside these walls who have doubts on that subject : who think that, partly by what has been done in the way of legislation as to education, and still more, perhaps, by results which are likely to follow in the years that are coming, the work of the National Society will be gradually superseded in this country ; and that we are only prolonging its existence unnecessarily when, in fact, it has done its work, and a new system has been inaugurated which will certainly before long supersede it. I do not at all myself, any more than the meeting, entertain at present that view of the matter. (Cheers.) I believe that there never was a time when the National Society, professing the principles that it does, was more needed in the country than it is now. (Cheers.) What has taken place with regard to education during the last few years is, as I understand it, that a great compromise has been effected on the subject of education under Parliamentary sanction. Now, a compromise may mean one of two things. It may mean that people are ready to sacrifice principle to expediency, and are willing not to insist on their principles because of certain advantages which they think are to be attained by sacrificing them, or because they think that nothing further is to be gained by insisting upon them. But there is another sense of the word 'compromise' which, perhaps, is more really applicable in this case. It is said that Englishmen are fond of compromises. I understand that to mean that we in England are quite ready to allow all principles which are true to have fair-play—that we are in favour of public discussion to an extent which is allowed nowhere else—and therefore every principle which has any truth at the bottom of it is sure to be allowed fair-play. Now, there are certain principles with regard to education of which we have heard a great deal in past years, and of which we are likely to hear more in the time to come. One principle which has been very much insisted upon is this—that all parents are really responsible for the education, and especially for the religious education, of their children ; that you are, therefore, not entitled, in the name of the State, or in the name of the Church, or in the name of anybody whatsoever, to step in between the parent and the child, and to annul by any acts of yours that union which God Almighty has formed between them ; and that, consequently, if the conscience of the parent disapprove of the form of education which you are anxious to give to his child, you are bound to listen to his conscientious objections. That is a principle which, when clearly stated in full discussion, very few people in the present day are anxious to disallow. But there is another principle which is almost as important, that the State in a well-regulated country has a sort of parental authority in reference to all its subjects ; and that if you find there are parents who altogether neglect their children, as you would not allow any cruelty to the child's body, so neither are you to allow tyranny over the child's mind ; and that, therefore, the State may step in and take the place of the parent,

and discharge the duties which the parent, if he were alive to his responsibilities, would himself perform. Now, if this be true of the State, it is still more true of the Christian Church, which stands, of course, in such a relation to all its members that it is bound to protect them against any attempts to deprive them of the blessings of the Gospel. (Cheers.) While, then, we fully allow the general authority of the parent to regulate the religious instruction of his child, we cannot give up the right of the State to see that the child is cared for on the one side, and still less can we give up the right of the Church to perform its duty of giving full Gospel instruction to all who are capable of receiving it. (Cheers.) Now take these principles and let them work. That is what we have attempted to do in some of the recent arrangements with regard to education. Whether we have hit upon the right way of allowing these two principles to have full force time alone can show. The effort has been to give fair-play to both sets of principles. Whether we have hit upon the best mode of solving the difficulty, or not, has still to be seen; but while the difficulty is unsolved, there must certainly remain a great duty on the part of the National Society to maintain its old principles, and to see that no sacrifice is made of that which we esteem to be so valuable. (Cheers.) I will now turn for a moment to another point. There is, no doubt, a very widespread belief throughout the country at the present moment, that the sort of religious instruction which is suitable to children is of a very simple kind indeed. We all probably in our own families show our belief in this principle by the kind of instruction which we give to our children. A simple statement of the simple facts and truths of the Gospel, having as little of controversy as possible mixed up with them—this is the sort of instruction which we each of us desire to give in our own nurseries to our own children; and we cannot, therefore, be surprised that we should hear from all parts of the country a demand for a very simple and, as men call it, an undogmatic system of instruction to be given generally in the religious teaching of schools. Controversy is, of course, totally unsuited to the minds of children. The minute technical distinctions of theology are quite beyond their comprehension. The simple teaching of Our Lord and Saviour and the simplest statement and doctrines of Christianity—these are what parents desire to give to their own children, and these are what, not unnaturally, a great number of persons throughout the community demand should be taught to the children in our schools. But then, this principle, excellent as it is, may be strained into a statement that we are to have no Christian doctrine taught. (Hear, hear.) Why, is it really necessary to point out that to teach Christianity without doctrine is an absolute absurdity? (Cheers.) For Christianity is a series of doctrines (hear, hear); and the question is, not whether we are to have doctrine or no doctrine, but whether we are to teach the simple doctrines that are suitable for children, or to go off into theological niceties which not children only, but perhaps a great many grown-up people, cannot thoroughly understand. While, then, on the one hand, we are quite willing to admit that we ought not to force minute points of theology upon the unformed minds of children, on the other hand we altogether repudiate the idea that you can have Christianity without doctrine, or any sort of education suitable for human souls which is not built upon doctrine. (Hear, hear.) Now, a compromise has been made on this subject, and I am not here either to defend or to assail it; because, having got a system which we can use, it is wiser for us to see how to use it in the best way we can, than, by striving after what we cannot get, to run the risk of losing what we have got. I have my private opinion on this subject

but that has nothing to do with the present meeting. What I wish to point out is, that as the compromise is in an unfinished state, and as the public mind is unsettled upon it, the National Society would be extremely blind to its duty if it handed over the work to the party which maintains only one of the propositions to which I have alluded. I believe there is a great fallacy in the public mind at the present moment, as to the possibility of giving undogmatic teaching. Of course everything turns on the definition of terms, and when we have defined 'dogma' and 'dogmatic teaching,' we may be able to decide the question; but that it is possible to teach children with immortal souls without any reference to the Being who made them—that it is possible to teach children, with souls redeemed by the Blood of Christ, without any reference to the Saviour who redeemed them, or by talking of Him merely as you would talk of any human philosopher or ordinary teacher—this I, for one, altogether repudiate. (Cheers.) And if we can only maintain here in England, for some years to come, a distinct recognition of the absolute necessity of basing all teaching on religious truth, and showing that religious truth depends on doctrine, I feel confident that the mists that have gathered around this subject will disappear, and the clear intelligence of the English people will feel that the cause to which this Society is pledged is the cause of truth and of religion. (Cheers.) I am perfectly sure that it is not the desire of the great body of the English nation to sacrifice the Christianity of the country. (Cheers.) What course may be taken in the future I cannot say, but of this I feel as confident as I do of the excellence of the English character—that the time will speedily come when many of the foolish sayings which are current in the present day will be set aside, and when men will realise that no teacher worthy of the name will go into a school fettered, and not allowed to speak of Almighty God to the children and not to breathe the name of, or express his sentiments as to, that Great Being through whose death children and teacher alike can alone hope for happiness either here or hereafter. (Cheers.) With these views as to the duty which devolves on the National Society at the present time, I call upon the Earl of Shaftesbury to move the first Resolution. (Cheers.)

The Earl of SHAFTESBURY moved the following Resolution:—

'That the Report be approved, and the thanks of the Meeting be tendered to the Committee for their labours in the interest of Religious Education, and especially for their successful exertions, since the passing the Education Act of 1870, to adapt the measures of the National Society as the organ of the Church in matters of Education to the altered requirements of the time.'

His Lordship said:—It is true that we are in a crisis—a crisis not only as to religious education, but to the Church itself; and I cannot speak without a feeling of deep emotion upon this question, because I feel, and most assuredly believe, that if religion be severed from national education, national education would be severed from the Church and from the clergy, and one half of the duties of the clergy would be taken from them. If that time ever arrives when the clergy are driven from the schoolroom, and confined to the functions of the pulpit, one half of the argument for maintaining the Established Church will have been destroyed, and the remaining half will be valueless, and will be transferred to the balance of our opponents, who will turn it against us with vigorous effect. (Hear, hear.) This explains in a great measure why many of them are so ardent in favour of the establishment of School Boards and the enforcement of the principle of compulsion. They know that such Boards will never give the distinctive education that is given through the National Society; and

while compulsion is a thing that we can do little with and nothing without, I ventured to say formerly, as I will now repeat, that I believe no Parliament that is or about to be will ever give the power of compelling the attendance of children to denominational schools; and this being the case, we can perfectly understand the certain and irresistible progress of the School Boards. The real question is, in what way we are to maintain for our children the true, full, and complete teaching of the Gospel of Christ, to maintain their right to be brought up in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord'? We have no desire to include controversial points in our education, but there are distinctive truths which must be impressed upon the minds of children, and which they are as capable of understanding as the Archbishop of Canterbury himself; and it is only in voluntary and denominational schools that these truths are received and expressed. I must say that I look with utter dismay upon that lukewarm form of belief and that lukewarm system of religious knowledge which characterise Board Schools. A large proportion of these schools give a sort of dose of warm water which is neither nourishing nor agreeable. (Laughter.) That is all the children get, and we know what the Bible says of such teaching. The children have a right to the true juice of the grape, the true fruit of the genuine vine of the Gospel (cheers); and it is for the National Society to help forward by every effort in their power the assertion for the children of these realms of this indefeasible right. (Cheers.) I know, indeed, that the wisest and best of the Nonconformists are at one with us in reference to the teaching of distinctive truths. The other day one of the greatest of them said to me, in a letter—'The Board Schools are taking everything from us, and we must do what we can for the instruction of our children in that truth which they will never get at except under the voluntary and denominational system.' (Hear, hear.) I can foresee too the time when a Chancellor of the Exchequer—not perhaps of the present Government, but of some future one—will rise in his place in Parliament and say to us: 'We must in future withhold grants from denominational schools; we have given you every power, by means of an Act of Parliament, to institute School Boards and spread education, and we cannot any longer give large grants to schools which are not purely national.' I feel perfectly certain that such a time is near at hand; and I am inclined to think, from what I see in the public prints, that such a proposal would not be without favour or acceptance (hear, hear); and we cannot doubt that when that time comes, we shall be hardly driven in reference to the maintenance of denominational and dogmatic teaching in our schools. We must be prepared for that terrible issue. The School Boards are advancing in all directions, armed with the mysterious and irresistible word 'inefficient.' In the metropolis they have already destroyed a great number of our best schools through the use of that word. It is a dreadful word, because it is undefined, and because there is no appeal against it. I may be called an alarmist on this question, but in my opinion it is a very good thing to be an alarmist in reference to such a matter, if alarm does not unnerve us, but increases our vigour. (Hear, hear.) I confess that I was never more alarmed in my life than when I read the report of a speech which was recently made by a bishop of the Church of England at a meeting after I had left the chair. The right reverend prelate is reported to have said that 'he did not think they had any reason to be afraid of Board Schools.' Why, they are the very things that we have cause to be afraid of. (Hear, hear.) 'It was quite true,' he went on to say—let the meeting mark this admission—'that those schools had taken away a large proportion of children from the day-schools.' Well, surely that was like taking the part of

Hamlet out of the play. (Hear, hear.) Then he went on to say that 'there was still ample room for their efforts in Sunday-schools, which could not be injured by the new educational system.' I believe that Sunday-schools will be injured by the new system, and I would ask anyone present whether he thinks Sunday-schools can ever adequately supplement defective teaching in day-schools? (Hear, hear.) Is it not a fact that in America the Sunday-schools can only with great difficulty attract 40 per cent. of the children who attend the day-schools?—while as regards ragged schools in London, of which I have had some experience (cheers), I may remark that very few of those who have been absorbed in the Board Schools have returned on Sundays to the place where they were trained in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Sunday-schools can never do the work of day-schools. It is exceedingly difficult, remembering how corrupt the heart of man is, to produce any impression on those who have been engaged for six days consecutively in learning secular matters; indeed, it will be next to impossible to obtain their attendance, and in many cases such priggishness will have been produced in the mind, that the children will be more like peacocks than boys and girls—in fact, they will become so conceited that they will look upon secular knowledge as the *ne plus ultra* of mankind. But is nothing to be done? Yes, much. I implore you to make every effort you can to promote the object of this Society! Appeal to the wealthy and to the great to come forward and use their wealth and influence for the maintenance of the great system of religious teaching which this Society supports. Appeal to the people at large. Do not be afraid of the people. (Hear, hear.) Tell them Mother Church made them what they are, and will watch over them, and make them better than they are if they will receive her beneficent teaching. (Cheers.) Be instant in season and out of season; multiply your living agents; leave not a stone unturned; show that you are ready and determined for the conflict; let there be no blinking, let there be no shrinking, let there be no fearing; go forward, resolved that you will fight the good fight of faith, determined that everything shall rest, not upon the modern rock of St. Peter at Rome, but upon that Rock of which alone we know anything from Scripture—the Rock of Ages! (Cheers.)

The Marquis of SALISBURY, in seconding the Resolution, said:—I understand this Resolution to imply that the National Society is not set aside, but that it has still a noble work left to do. The attitude which the Society has taken with respect to recent educational legislation seems to me to be eminently wise. It has not given up its efforts in despair, but it has taken the best possible position it could take under the circumstances; it has recognised the necessity of falling into the new order of things, and of making the best of the matter in the interest of the Church. Parliament, as you are aware, adopts the wise principle that when, after long controversy, it has settled a question, it will not be induced to reopen that question until it has been enlightened by very considerable experience; and this rule, I believe, will be followed in the present case. We may thus take it for granted that our existing legislation is that which will govern the education of this country for many years. But it is a great mistake to say that the Act of 1870 has stopped, or was intended to stop, denominational education. What the Act of 1870 said was this: 'The efforts of voluntary bodies have failed to meet the necessities of every place, or the wishes of the population, and where they have failed we will supplement them. In many parts of the country voluntary action is sufficient and is more acceptable to the people, and therefore we will leave it to the population to choose its own system.' This great trial, this inquest of the nation, is going on at

this very time. In every part of the country the people are being asked which system they will adopt, and the National Society and its action will decide the verdict in many cases. In parishes where there are wealthy people we may trust to their making the efforts that are required, but that is not the case in all. There are many parishes where the poor people desire that the denominational system shall be maintained, and there the National Society may step in and do an infinity of good, by keeping up during the crisis the system which the people value. By its grants it may prevent those parishes from sliding into the School Board system. And this reminds me of one of the details of the Act of 1870 on which I have always looked with the greatest impatience, by which when a School Board is once thrust upon a parish nothing can remove it. This is a great evil, but the business of the National Society is to remember that by vigorous efforts many of the rural districts may be prevented from sliding into a system which they hate. It has been said, and said justly, that Board Schools are an experiment. What the issue of that experiment may be I will not pretend to discuss, but this at least is clear, that it is exposed to considerable and increasing unpopularity. The dislike of the undenominational teaching in the Board Schools is increasing more and more, and people are feeling the evils of a system in which the very outlines of Christian doctrine are effaced. But there are other evils to which the School Boards are liable. It is evident that schools cost money, and it is a fact, which apparently the ratepayers are only just beginning to find out, and in the case of School Board Schools they cost a great deal of money. I do not wish to cast upon the Boards the slightest imputation of extravagance—on the contrary, I believe they do the best they can under the circumstances; but the system itself involves expenses from which, even if the expenditure were met by the rates, the denominational system would be free. Thus, then, we have the religious feeling on the one hand, and the ratepayers' feeling on the other, and it is impossible not to see that these feelings may ultimately rise to such a height as to impose a check upon the School Board system. Between this day and that crisis, however, there will be a time in which we may save the rural schools; and if we fail to take advantage of it, they will be gone for ever. This is, then, a time not for ordinary but for special exertions; and while I have no wish to depreciate in the least degree the good done by the School Boards, or the motives of their members, it must be remembered that they are becoming distasteful to the population, and injurious to the religious faith of the people; and yet, notwithstanding all this, they may be submitted to, unless this Society, the organisation to which they look for succour, assists them in good time. As to the religious bearing of the National Society's work it is not my province to speak, but I must remind you that the Society is not simply an educating organisation, but represents the most distinctive marks of the principles of the Church of England, and therefore it deserves our support. It bears the banner of definite religion. Many good people believe that Christianity may best be preserved, and its spread promoted, by blurring its outlines and veiling its distinctive features. Men are, in fact, coming to realise, that if you wish to teach the Christian belief you must not be afraid to say what you believe, and that to teach the Christian faith you must not begin by saying that no particular truth is of special importance. That is a symptom of the public mind which it is the duty of the National Society to foster and strengthen. It is the special function of the Society to discharge this duty, and in doing so it will be supported by all who wish well to the Church of England. (Cheers.)

The Resolution was supported by Mr. HUGH BIRLEY, M.P. for Manchester, who apologised for occupying such an early place in the programme, because he had to go to the House of Commons to vote against Mr. Dixon's motion for Universal Compulsion. Mr. Birley said:—Since the establishment of the Society it has passed through what I will term the three periods of its existence. In the first, from 1811 to 1839, its task was fulfilled almost entirely by private and voluntary effort; in the second period, from 1839 to 1870, the State assisted in the work of primary education, and very materially stimulated it; and since 1870, the date of the passing of the Education Act, the Society has entered on its third period, and I entirely concur in the opinion that in the future the Society will occupy even a more important position than it has held in the past. The results brought out in the Report I regard with the utmost satisfaction, as it is proved beyond a doubt that the great mass of children in the Elementary Schools of the country are in Church of England schools. After referring to other educational statistics, Mr. Birley continued: I consider that the pressure under which Church Schools are now labouring, owing to the operation of the School Board system and other causes, deserves the most serious consideration. The National Society can do much to assist schools which are suffering in this way, not only by giving grants of *matériel*, but also by offering pecuniary aid in cases where there is any difficulty in the maintenance of pupil-teachers; and with the reports of the Inspectors before them, it will not be difficult to guard against any improper application of the funds. Notwithstanding the observations of Lord Salisbury, who has urged that there is little cause for alarm from the growth of School Boards, I think we have much to fear in one sense, although in another we have nothing to fear, for I believe that if Voluntary Schools are properly worked the education given in them will be superior to that afforded in the Board Schools. I have no belief in the superiority of Board Schools. Their managers may be gentlemen of the highest ability, and most earnest in the discharge of their duties; but they cannot go into their schools day after day, as the managers of Voluntary Schools can, and in any case the kindly word of the Voluntary School manager is far more powerful for good than the merely official visit of the Board School manager. On all grounds I deprecate the exhibition of too great a jealousy of Board Schools, for I contend that their teachers and managers will ultimately see how much they have to gain from the maintenance of friendly relations with Church Schools. The School Boards ere long will have a hard time before them, for they are incurring the illwill of the ratepayers, and ultimately those who are at present among their members would shrink from the duties imposed upon them. One thing I will urge on the friends of all Church Schools, to see to it that the education they offer is the best of its kind, and given in the best possible way. Believe me the best principle for Compulsory Education is a thoroughly good education. Then, again, I must add that I am anxious to see the National Society doing more to found and maintain Middle-class Schools. If the primary education of the country is continually improved, if children are to have the opportunity of getting upward even to the University, the middle-class education must also be advanced; and I believe it would be a great impulse not only to the children, but to the masters and mistresses in the Elementary Schools, if they had the prospect, after a certain number of years, of being promoted to Middle-class Schools, with better opportunities and increased emoluments.

The second Resolution—'That in the opinion of this Meeting the supporters of Voluntary Schools are, under the present system, placed at an unfair disadvantage'—was proposed by Lord LYTTELTON, who said: The proposition

affirmed in this Resolution is one the urgency of which must have been foreseen by the friends of the voluntary system, at the time when the Education Act was passed, and which is becoming more and more manifest every day. I do not wish to argue the general case of School Boards against Voluntary Schools, because I know there are some friends of Education and even some Conservatives who prefer the principle of School Boards, and doubt whether the two principles can coexist. But I assume that now, as at the time of the passing of the Act of 1870, every leading statesman and advocate of that Act desires that the two systems should coexist. Opinions were expressed in 1870 in every variety of form, asserting that the new system was to be introduced as supplementary to the old—that they were both to coexist, and that where the old system was sufficient the new was not to be imposed. This view was held by many of the most eminent members of both Houses—by Mr. Forster, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bruce, Lord Ripon, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, Lord Sandon, the Duke of Richmond, and others. The other acceptation of the Act is erroneous, by which, instead of the School Boards being introduced as supplementary and secondary, they have been held to be primary and fundamental. In this case there has been a complete inversion of the proper order of things, and that which should have been made ancillary and concurrent has been put first. In fact the only party which has represented the true state of the case is the Birmingham League, for they say that from their point of view the Act is erroneous, because it sanctions two principles which cannot coexist, and that the Voluntary system ought to be destroyed. But how could it be expected that difficulties should not arise? The material advantages of the School Boards are enormous. They have, to begin with, an unlimited purse, as inexhaustible as the Poor Rate; and when, therefore, we see their magnificent buildings rising, as by the enchanter's wand, we need not wonder. Those, then, who argue that the two principles can coexist, must rely either on the national feeling in favour of religious education, or else on the aversion to School Board expenditure. But as far as the latter is concerned, the objection, it seems, is not to the principle, but only to the excess to which it is carried. As to the religious feeling this, doubtless, is very powerful, but it is hard on the friends of Voluntary Schools to have to rely on that alone to compete with that which depends for support on unlimited resources. And what has the experience of the last five years shown? The present Government have shown clearly that they have every desire to act on the policy of their predecessors in office in availing themselves of voluntary effort. But, on the other hand, the Bishop of London, at a recent meeting, said he believed the danger was passing away, and that we had seen the worst of it. The Bishop could, I am confident, only have referred to his own diocese, where it is true that only a few schools have been actually transferred to Boards; but even in London, as in every part of the country, the inequality of conditions is being more and more felt, and the efforts of the managers to maintain the Voluntary Schools can only be compared to the slow and gradual loosening of the hand of the drowning man from the boat by which he is escaping destruction. If the Bishop had known what the Committee of this Society know he would have spoken less hopefully. The Committee is about to address the Education Department, and it is hoped that this grievance will be alleviated. I am not unmindful of the difficult position of those who are charged with the administration of the Education Department, but I have spoken in the interests of the Church of England and of the children of the Church. It is the case of freedom *versus* restraint. We do not want to teach what may be unfitted for children, but we claim to be allowed

to choose what we think fit. I know the difficulties of statesmen and politicians, and if national education cannot be carried on without the sacrifice of part of religious teaching, then we must consider the case; but that is not yet proved.

The Bishop of LICHFIELD, after explaining that he had only undertaken to second the Resolution because of the unavoidable absence of his Grace the Archbishop of York, said:—The only difficulty which I see in the Resolution arises from the abstract terms in which it is drawn up. What I desiderate in it is, that while admitting the disadvantages to which it refers, some remedy for them should be suggested. There is in the minds of many persons, whose organ is, I suppose, to be found in the Birmingham League, a disposition to destroy the denominational system, not only in the Church of England, but in all other bodies, and I fear that those other bodies are not as ready as we could wish, to join the Church in fighting the common foe. Fight, however, we must, and my advice would take the form of Trochu's at the Siege of Paris: 'Combatte! combattre encore! combattre toujours!' or, as the New Zealander would say, 'Ake, Ake, Ake—Ever, Ever, Ever!' There can be no doubt that the National Society and the schools affiliated to it represent a very large majority of the nation which is in favour of denominational education, and we may say that the practical friends of religious education are in the proportion of at least three to one to those who support any other system. We have 1,200,000 children in our Church schools, and not more than 400,000 in the secular schools. Why, then, should the Church be deprived of her position? Why should the eight millions she has spent be taken away?—for taken away it is, when the schools built on the faith of the rules of the National Society are converted into Board schools, where, as the Archbishop truly said, there is no religious instruction at all that is worthy of the name. The injustice must be manifest to all, but it is one of the disabilities under which the Church of England labours. I once heard Mr. Forster say that the spread of Board Schools all over the country was only a question of time, and everyone is beginning to realise that Voluntary Schools are entering on a period of great difficulty. I have even heard of it at Lichfield, and if there is a Board School there, I am inclined to believe there must be one everywhere. The difficulty, in the first place, very naturally arises from the circumstance that people do not like to pay twice. If they pay rates, they have also to pay their voluntary subscriptions, and hence the Voluntary Schools labour under this great disadvantage, which seems to increase rather than to diminish, and, as a consequence, the number of Voluntary Schools is likely to fall off throughout the country. But, again, there are many who believe that compulsory attendance is desirable, on the principle that children, who would otherwise be playing truant, are forced to go to school. Why, then, should not the Government give the same power of compulsion to denominational schools which it accords to Board schools? If it is desirable in one case, it is surely desirable in all. These, then, are the hindrances which place Voluntary Schools at a disadvantage, and I suppose that the Resolution means that steps should be taken in the Legislature to obtain a remedy. I must confess that I have little hope of help from that quarter. I believe we must look within ourselves, and to the blessing of God; and that blessing, which has been so freely accorded to the National Society in the past, will, we may hope, be increased in proportion to the difficulties which are multiplying around us. What, then, are the remedies within our reach, which we may hope to find successful? First, there is the matter of funds. No one who looks at the fact that there are 1,117,461 children in our Church of England schools, can doubt that

an immense number of persons are interested in them, and will maintain them, even if double, treble, or even quadruple funds are required. Provided we are agreed on this point, that our own schools must and shall be maintained, the prospect is very far from being hopeless. It may be done, and it will be done, even if the few have to do it, as is, unfortunately, too often the case with the support of the great London societies, in which the few have to do all the work. But we must give to the work which is in jeopardy, we must give out of our savings, and, if needful, give twice or even three times our accustomed subscriptions. The balance-sheet shows that I am not overestimating the elasticity of our revenue, and the Report gives us also exceeding great comfort, especially in what is said by Canon Norris. I may add that I know of a case in which a Board school was established against the wishes of the clergyman of the parish, and in which the ladies of the district at once opened and conducted a Church school; and to this school the parents preferred to send their children, because they objected to the secular system of the Board school. The value of ladies' teaching may be estimated from the results mentioned by Canon Norris in his Report for 1874, in which he says that it is a striking fact that the seven colleges which stood highest in his marks for teaching last year were all women's colleges. The mean mark for women's teaching was 63 in 1873, and 67 in 1874; and for the men, 55 in 1873, and 60 in 1874; and he adds, 'This difference quite corresponds with my own general impression, that women of that age handle religious subjects more impressively and more spiritually than men.' We, then, of the masculine gender must hide our diminished heads, and we must look to the women of England to find a remedy for the evils we deplore, by assisting in our night schools, and especially in our Sunday-schools. I believe that we have a great bank of teaching in the Christian mothers of England—that we have thousands of women amongst us who will continue to teach the principles of the Church diligently to her children. But, then, there is another great question as regards the teachers of the future—the pupil-teachers of the present. Will they take the side of the Church or of the State? Everything depends on the tone and teaching which they carry into the training institutions. Whence can they derive it, if not from the clergy? The work cannot all be done in the two years during which they are in the training colleges, and therefore I wish to ask the clergy of England whether they are satisfied with the statement of Canon Norris, that of the students who went up to him for examination last year only 29 per cent. had received help from their clergymen? I do really hope that, under the pressure of the disabilities under which we are labouring, we shall revise every part of our present system, and this in particular. I remember a clergyman who had been reading a book, which all should read who have not read it—'The Life of Bishop Patteson'—and who said that the thing which struck him most in the Bishop's career was the way in which he taught himself. He began in the morning, and he went on until the evening, teaching in twenty different languages, in order that he might be able the more fully and perfectly to do the work to which he was called. And if we remember that this is a question of communicating, as a clergyman only can communicate, religious teaching to those who are to form the next generation of teachers, I cannot be satisfied with 29 per cent.—why, I should have expected 99 per cent. I speak, of course, partly as a missionary bishop. We had no trained schoolmasters, and it is true of every missionary that he holds it to be his duty, that as Our Blessed Saviour taught as well as preached so he must follow his example. There is room for a great change in this respect, and I am convinced that if the English clergy will

only give half an hour a day to the instruction and help of their pupil-teachers, they will be attracted to the teaching of the Church, and will become so firmly fixed and rooted in the principles of our holy religion that nothing will move them—just as in the case of the Woodard Middle-class Schools, where thousands of young men carry out in their lives the principles taught them in those admirable institutions. I trust, then, that we shall not give way, but strive to the utmost to fulfil our duty. (Cheers.)

Lord REDESDALE, in proposing that the thanks of the meeting be presented to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, said :—I must confess that my views of the position are somewhat different from those of one or two of the speakers. I do not think we ought to sit still. We have a grievance, and we ought to say so. We are rated to support School Board schools, and we have a conscientious objection to education without religion. We all remember the Church-rates grievance, and we know what came of that. Well, the Church ought to say what the opponents of Church-rates said then. Parliament is to be influenced. It is not at all hostile to the maintenance of denominational schools, and if we come forward and state our grievances boldly, firmly, and clearly, we shall have a great advantage in the discussions which will take place in the Legislature. I hope, then, that the Society will prepare a form of petition. It is nonsense to sit still and hope that something will be done for us if we do not ask. It is no use to act on the principle of religious liberty in one way and not in another. We conceive that if we pay for education the money ought to go to support the teaching of our religion, and the Church cannot exert herself too much in defence of this view, and to press it upon the country.

His Lordship then proceeded to move the Resolution, with which he said he felt confidence everyone would agree; and after it had been seconded by the Bishop of Hereford, who expressed the deep sense of obligation which the meeting felt to His Grace, who had, notwithstanding the great calls upon his time, come down to preside over them, the proposition was put to the meeting, and carried amid general applause.

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY then pronounced the Benediction, and the proceedings closed.

PAST WORK OF THE SOCIETY.

SINCE its formation in 1811, the Society has expended nearly a million in promoting the Education of the Children of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church, involving an expenditure of at least twelve times as much from other sources for the same end.

WORK OF THE SOCIETY SINCE THE PASSING OF THE EDUCATION ACT (1870).

Building Grants.—Since the passing of the Education Act of 1870, the Society has voted £93,190 for building and enlarging Schools in 2,000 places. These grants will assist in providing school accommodation for nearly 300,000 additional children.

Grants to Training Colleges.—During the same period, grants to the amount of £1,060 have been voted for the enlargement of Church Training Colleges, and £14,305 have been paid towards the maintenance of students in these Training Colleges, whilst a further sum of £1,535 has been expended to secure the examination of the students in Religious Knowledge.

Grants for Books, Fittings, Certificated Teachers, and Repairs and Improvements.—During the past two years grants to the amount of £3,859 have been voted for books, fittings, and repairs and improvements, and for the employment of a Certificated Teacher for the first time.

Grants for Diocesan Inspection.—The Society has expended £268 during the past five years in providing Schedules for the use of the Diocesan Inspectors. It has also recently decided to vote grants for the Diocesan Inspection of Schools, and up to the present time grants to the amount of £600 have been voted to ten dioceses.

Expenditure for advice to School Managers.—Since August 1870, the Society has expended £891 in giving advice to School Managers with reference to their position under the Education Act, and in resisting the violation of School Trusts, either by an unnecessary transfer to a School Board, or by transferring on such terms as are unduly subversive of the original School Trusts.

Cheques or Drafts should be made payable to the Treasurer or bearer (not order), and crossed 'Messrs. DRUMMOND.'

Post-office Orders may be made payable to JAMES DUNCAN, at the Charing-Cross Post-office, and forwarded to the National Society's Office, Sanctuary, Westminster.

NATIONAL SOCIETY

For Promoting the Education of the Poor in the
Principles of the Established Church.

Churchmen are earnestly requested to meet the pressing wants of the Society by means of Donations and Annual Subscriptions, and thus enable the Committee to give a favourable response to the numerous and urgent applications for aid that are being daily received.

THE SOCIETY'S WORK.

1. To build and enlarge Church Schools.
2. To protect the 14,000 Schools in union with the Society, and other Church Schools, in which a sound secular as well as religious education is given.
3. To increase the efficiency of the poorer class of Church Schools by means of grants towards fittings, books, and repairs.
4. To enable Church Schools not at present assisted by Government to become efficient Public Elementary Schools, by grants towards the employment of a Certificated Teacher for the first time.
5. To maintain the existing Church Training Colleges, and to provide for the examination of the students in religious knowledge.
6. To foster an efficient system for the diocesan inspection of Church Schools under the direction of the Bishop of each diocese.
7. To diffuse the most recent and trustworthy information on educational topics, and to give advice to School Managers.
8. Generally to adopt every legitimate means for the maintenance and extension of the voluntary system of Church Education which has proved so great a blessing to this nation.



